



Portfolio Capstone Project
English Studies Concentration
(Non-Thesis Option) for UTRGV MA English Degree
(Approved May 15, 2016)

The capstone requirement for the non-thesis option of the English Studies concentration for the MA in English includes both a written portfolio and an oral defense of the portfolio. Students are eligible to complete the capstone requirement after at least 27 hours (of the 36-hour degree plan) have been completed, inclusive of current coursework.

In order to have materials for the portfolio requirement, graduate students retain copies of work submitted throughout their graduate coursework. The portfolio consists of 4 to 6 items selected by the student from graduate coursework, in addition to an introductory reflective essay. Items may vary in genre, length, and format. At least one item in the portfolio should be a seminar paper, approximately 20 pages in length, and incorporating research. Types of items can also include an abstract, book review, academic blog entry, case study, curriculum guide, teaching or evaluation tool, or other materials produced in graduate coursework. The graduate student must revise and edit the selected items as needed in order to represent best efforts. The total length of the portfolio will vary. The portfolio represents the diverse work and skills that graduate students have developed during their degree program.

In the portfolio, at least one item must be chosen from coursework in Literatures and Cultural Studies (ENGL courses numbered 6300-6316, 6355-6357); at least one item must be chosen from coursework in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies (ENGL courses numbered 6320-6328); and at least one item must be chosen from coursework in Linguistics (ENGL courses numbered 6360-6377). After these requirements are met, other items in the portfolio may be selected from any coursework taken for the degree. All material to complete the portfolio should be selected and revised by the graduate student in order to represent graduate-level achievements in English Studies.

The introductory reflective essay is a crucial component of the portfolio. The introductory reflective essay should accomplish the following goals within 10-15 typed, doubled-spaced pages: 1) provide an overview of the materials in the portfolio, with a rationale for the materials selected; 2) explain the additional research and revision work done for the portfolio; 3) evaluate how the writing and revision contributes to the writer's understanding of the genres represented in the portfolio; 4) discuss how the revised portfolio materials advance particular fields or areas in English Studies; and 5) synthesize

how the revised portfolio materials contribute to the academic and professional development of the writer.

When 27 credit hours have been completed or are underway, the graduate student will identify a portfolio examination committee chair. The graduate student will work with the portfolio examination committee chair to form a portfolio examination committee with a total membership of three or four graduate faculty members who teach ENGL courses. The committee will have at least one faculty member representing each of the three areas of coursework for the English Studies concentration: Linguistics; Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies; and Literatures and Cultural Studies.

The final draft of the portfolio will be submitted in digital format to the full committee at least 21 days before the scheduled date for the oral defense of the portfolio. The oral defense, a meeting of approximately one hour in length, provides an opportunity for the graduate student to discuss how the portfolio demonstrates intellectual and scholarly proficiency and for the faculty members on the portfolio examination committee to ask questions and dialogue about the revision process and the portfolio items. Oral defenses to meet the portfolio requirement will take place in fall and spring semesters but will not take place in summer.